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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 001475

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MUTHANNA TRIBAL LEADER ESTABLISHES NEW, SECULAR
POLITICAL PARTY

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Paul O'Friel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Muthanna cable.

[1](#)2. (S/REL MCFI) Summary: On May 11 Abu Chefat, a powerful well-connected sheikh of the influential Albu Hassan tribe, registered a new, secular political party, Abn'a al-Furatain, "Sons of the Two Euphrates." Although the organization will be initially centered in the southern provinces, Abu Chefat said he hoped to expand the party's Shi'a base to include Anbar and other Sunni areas. He intends, as well, to reach out to neighboring Arab states for support. End Summary.

"SONS OF THE TWO EUPHRATES"

[1](#)3. (S/REL MCFI) Sheikh Najim Abed Sayah Sayah (also known as Abu Chefat), a leading member of the influential Albu Hassan tribe, registered a new, secular party on May 11. Abu Chefat told us May 10 that he had completed all the formalities, including obtaining the requisite 500 signatures, needed to establish the party, which will be called Abn'a al-Furatain, "Sons of the Two Euphrates."

[1](#)4. (S/REL MCFI) Abu Chefat said the organization will be national and secular in nature. "The party stands for all Iraqis) Shi'a or Sunni; Arab or Kurd; Muslim or Christian."

SOUTHERN SHI'A BASE, BUT SUNNI OUTREACH PLANNED

[1](#)5. (S/REL MCFI) Although initially focused on like-minded sheikhs in Muthanna, Diwaniya, Najaf, and Dhi Qar, Abu Chefat said he hoped to encourage Sunni tribes in Anbar province with whom he had ties to join the new political movement. (Note: Abu Chefat was one of the Muthanna tribal representatives who attended the November 2007 funeral of Sheikh Sittar.) Looking outside Iraq, Abu Chefat said he hoped, as well, to reach out to neighboring Arab states for support.
CROCKER